

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

On page 8 of the specification, following the second paragraph, please insert the following paragraph:

Figure 8 is an enlarged view in cross-section showing the edge of the flange portion of the locking head cover of the first exemplary embodiment;

Please amend the second full paragraph on page 10 of the specification as follows:

With continued reference to Figures 2-5, a stop portion cover 34 is sized for close-fitted mated engagement with stop portion 20_22 so that it substantially encases stop portion 22, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. Stop portion cover 34 includes an end wall 36 and a cylindrical surrounding side wall 37 that encloses an interior 38 which mates with stop portion 22. An edge of sidewall 37 opposite end wall 36 is provided with an inwardly projecting lip 39 in order to retain stop portion cover 34 on stop portion 22. To this end, it should be appreciated that stop portion cover 34 is formed of a stiff yet resilient material, such as plastic, rubber and the like. Stop portion cover 34 may be manufactured in any suitable manner, such as by injection molding.

Please amend the second full paragraph on page 11 of the specification as follows:

In any event, locking mechanism 42 includes a housing 44 having a cylindrical interior and an axial opening 46 of generally rectangular cross-section sized that forms an entryway for latch portion 24. Thus, locking head 40 can receive latch portion 26-24 to define an engaged state. A lock core 48 may be received in the interior of housing 44 and held in position by means of a pin 50 through bore 52. Lock core 48 is key operable and is of standard construction as is known in the art

so as to be actuated by a key, such as tubular key 54. Thus, locking head 40 has a peripheral head surface 41 and a transverse outer head face 56 that is opposite axial opening 46 in inner transverse head face 47, and face 56 has a keyway 58 sized for insertion of key 54 therein so that lock core 48 may be rotated relative to housing 44.

Please amend the second full paragraph on page 12 of the specification as follows:

With reference to Figures 9 and 10, it may be seen that locking head 40 is received in head cover 80 with latch head 28 being in an engaged state therewith so that outer surface margin 26 of shank portion 20 is adjacent locking head 40. In Figure 8, cap member 92 is in an open position, but may be moved to a closed position, as is shown in Figure 9 wherein cap portion 92 snap locks onto a ridge 96 formed at an edge of skirt 82.

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13 of the specification as follows:

With continued reference to Figures 7-10, it should be appreciated that flange edge 88 in this embodiment defines a seal structure which is enhanced by its truncated cross-section. The seal structure formed by flange edge 88 is operative when latch portion 24 is in the engaged state ~~the~~ to sealably engage the outer surface margin 26 of shank portion 20. This sealing engagement reduces the likelihood of the ingress of water and other contaminant into the lock mechanism of locking head 40. Further, cap member 92 reduces the likelihood of contamination from water, dust or other materials through keyway 58. Since head cover 80 is formed of a stiff yet resilient material, this sealing arrangement is enhanced. It should be understood, though, that the term "sealing" need not mean an absolute

seal but only that which is sufficient to reasonably protect the locking mechanism of locking head 40.